Cape Ann Visits of the Great Sea-Serpent (1639-1886)

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SEA-SERPENTS, more properly called sea-monsters, have been reported from antiquity to the present time. The first record of the great sea-serpent on Cape Ann goes back to John Josselyn's 'An Account of Two Voyages to New England' (1674) in which he related an incident told to him in 1639. Josselyn wrote, 'They told me of a sea-serpent or snake, that lay coiled upon a rock at Cape Ann; a boat passing by with Englishmen on board, and two Indians; they would have shot the serpent, but the Indians warned them, saying that if he were not killed outright, they would all be in danger of their lives.'[1] This incident was also recorded by Obadiah Turner 5 September 1641 when he described a sea-serpent off the shores of nearby Lynn. He wrote, according to Obadiah Oldpath,[2] 'We have likewise heard at Cape Ann the people have seen a monster like unto this which did there come out of the sea and coil himself upon the land.' It was nearly 200 years before another record was made. In the late summer of 1817 many reliable persons on Cape Ann got to witness visits of the great sea-serpent. The first sighting took place about 6 August. S. G. Perkins, a merchant of Boston, wrote to his friend Edward Everett in Paris on 20 August 1817 that some two weeks earlier two women living near the entrance to Gloucester Harbor saw the sea-serpent coming into the harbor, which was confirmed by several fishermen. They estimated it to be from 50 to 100 feet long, as round as a barrel, with a series of bunches on the back. The motion was rapid, producing a wake, and daily visits were made while apparently pursuing a run of herring. Col. Thomas H. Perkins, brother of the letter writer, was among the witnesses, as was the famous Daniel Webster.[3] From this time on, many sightings were made, and some of them were recorded for posterity. Many people thought at first these two women were misled by a line of porpoises or sharks following each other in a train. This still remains one possible explanation for some reports of sea-serpents, but in this case many subsequent and independent observations were made.

At a meeting of the Linnaean Society of New England 18 August 1817 held at Boston, the Hon. Judge John Davis, noted botanist and physician Dr. Jacob Bigelow, and naturalist Francis C. Gray were appointed to collect available evidence which was eventually published by the society.[4] The committee members wrote to Hon. Lonson Nash of Gloucester, a justice of the peace who was one of the witnesses, requesting him to gather information on oath to be signed and certified according to specified rules. A list of 24 questions was supplied to Mr. Nash so that each interview would be uniform and as complete as possible. Eight depositions were obtained from reliable witnesses. Altogether, 51 accounts of the sea-serpent in Gloucester Harbor were assembled. Coincidentally, at the time of the visits, a deformed black snake with a series of 40 humps on its back was killed by a workman at Loblolly Cove, and this was thought by some to be the young of the sea-serpent. This specimen, about three feet long, was given the scientific name *Scoliophis atlanticus* as a new spe-

1. John Josselyn, *An Account of Two Voyages to New England* (Mass. Hist. Coll. 23 [1674], 228).

2. Obadiah Oldpath (pseudonym of J. R. Newhall), *Lin: or Notable People and Notable Things in the Early History of Lynn* (1890), 500 pp.

3. J. K. Rogers, 'Daniel Webster and Col. T. H. Perkins, a Summer-day Outing in 1817,' *New England Magazine*, 4 (Jan. 1886), 13-26.

4. John Davis, Jacob Bigelow, and F. C. Gray, 'Report of a Committee of the Linnaean Society of New England Relative to a Large Marine Animal Supposed to be a Serpent, Seen Near Cape Ann, Mass., in August, 1817' (Boston: Cummings and Hilliard), *Trans. Linnaean Soc. of New England* (1817), 52 pp.

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cies and illustrated by Dr. Bigelow (actually it was a common black snake *Coluber constrictor* deformed by disease or injury—i.e. kertosis). It was some time before professional zoologists corrected this misinterpretation of a deformed snake as we shall see, but in fairness, it should be pointed out that the committee report did recognize that 'this animal approaches most nearly to the *Coluber constrictor*' (p. 40). It is unfortunate that the authors did not pursue this clue further. The thrill of making a great discovery blinded their better judgment and injured their own case to document the existence of a real sea-serpent. Thomas Helm pointed out that the Linnaean Society, being misled by the deformed snake, lost credence and consequently people lost faith in the Cape Ann reports.[5]

Following are excerpts from some of the eight depositions gathered by Mr. Nash and published by the Linnaean Society. Amos Story, a Gloucester mariner, observed 10 August 1817 what he believed to be a sea-serpent southeast of Ten Pound Island in Gloucester Harbor which he observed for 1.5 hours. His closest view was at a distance of some 20 rods (1 rod = 5.5 yards). It had a large head like a sea turtle held about a foot above water. Although he saw 10 to 12 feet of the body, no bunches were observed. It moved about a mile in some two to three minutes. Thirteen days later he saw it again while it was lying still on the surface, and with a spyglass (spotting scope) observed it for half an hour at a distance of about 40 rods. He saw about 50 feet of it, dark brown in color and thick as a man's body.

Solomon Allen III, a Gloucester shipmaster, saw the sea-serpent in Gloucester Harbor on 12, 13, and 14 August. He estimated the length to be 80 to 90 feet and the size of a half-barrel with bunches from head to tail. He was in a boat within 150 yards of the monster. The head resembled that of a rattlesnake, but nearly the size of the head of a horse. The motion was slow, sometimes going in circles. After sinking straight down it reappeared 200 yards away in two minutes. Mr. Allen estimated 50 bunches from 8 to 10 inches above the surface which moved sideways like a real serpent, whereas most people reported a vertical motion of the body. It was dark brown in color with rough and scaley appendages. The head was carried two feet above the water at times, but at the surface at other times. The mouth opened about 10 inches. Mr. Nash, who took the deposition, thought 50 bunches was an unreasonable number, that it was not scaley, and the motion was vertical rather than side-to-side like a snake. A. C. Oudemans, the great authority on sea-serpents, agreed with Nash on those points.[6]

Epes Ellery, another Gloucester shipmaster, also saw the sea-serpent in Gloucester Harbor on 14 August 1817. He estimated it was 150 fathoms away, and was observed through a spyglass. He saw about 40 feet of the animal with a body size of a two-gallon keg, and with bunches on the back, protruding above the water making a vertical motion. The same day William H. Foster, a Gloucester merchant, made about the same observations, but added that the animal made an abrupt turn like a staple (i.e., hair-pin turn). Three days later he saw it again through a spyglass. The head was the size of a man's head and a prong or spear one foot long and six inches in circumference arose from the head (Oudemans believed the 'prong' to be the tongue). Unlike Solomon Allen, Foster described the body as 'smooth.'

Matthew Gaffney, a ship carpenter from Gloucester, observed the sea-serpent on the same day, from a small boat, with which he was able to get within 30 feet of it. He also observed about 40 feet of the animal and estimated the body as round as a barrel with a head the size of a four-gallon keg. He agreed with the others the color was dark, but the underside was nearly white. When he shot at it with a musket it sank straight down, then reappeared unharmed 100 yards away. The motion was vertical and went a mile in two to three minutes. He also said it was smooth and made a sharp turn like a hair-pin. His statement was corroborated by his brother Daniel Gaffney. That same day Lonson Nash, the local justice of the peace, observed the creature for nearly half an hour with a spyglass and as close as 250 yards. He claimed no more than eight bunches on the back and believed the animal was actually straight, the bunches simply produced by the vertical motion of the body. He estimated the total length was 70 to 100 feet long, went a mile in four minutes, leaving a considerable wake, but with greater speed when swimming immersed. He, too, observed the hair-pin turns. The following day Joseph Lee, a fisherman of Manchester, saw the sea-serpent off Little Island (Kettle Island?) be-

5. Thomas Helm, *Monsters of the Deep* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1962), 232 pp.

6. A. C. Oudemans, *The Great Sea Serpent* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1892), 592 pp.

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The Great Sea-Serpent as seen in Gloucester Harbor on 14 August 1817, sketched by Capt. John Beach, Jr., and based on eye-witness accounts. Many observers stood at the windmill seen in the background. (Photo copy by Mark Sexton. Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Salem.)

tween Manchester and Gloucester. He drew a sketch of the animal, estimated to be about 100 feet long, now in the Manchester Historical Society and which was reproduced in 1979 for Essex County newspapers.[7]

Two days later a Gloucester youth, John Johnston, Jr., while passing from the shore to a vessel in Gloucester Harbor in a small boat, observed some 50 feet of the monster, but it was straight, without bunches. Capt. John Corlis and George Marble were also in the boat which got within two oars' length of the animal.

In addition to the eight depositions gathered and published by Lonson Nash, Capt. C. L. Sargent of the merchant marine, and a Gloucester resident, recorded testimony from 17 other citizens. His manuscript is in the archives of the Cape Ann Historical Association.[8]

Accordingly, on 10 August 1817 three witnesses made the following observations. Lydia Wonson saw the monster with a spyglass for nearly one hour between her house on Eastern Point and Ten Pound Island. It was 60 to 70 feet long resembling a series of buoys on a seine net (humps), formed a coil and then extended itself. The head was as large as that of a horse. William Row at a cove on Rocky Neck (Wonson's Cove?) saw the sea-serpent and two sharks come into the cove. He estimated the length to be 100 feet, it was in rapid motion, and when the head was above water, it was as broad as the head of a horse. Susan Stone observed the sea-serpent make a hair-pin turn and thought the head had the shape of a dog.

Twelve other persons described their experiences of 14 August when most of them were standing near the windmill on Fort Point at the eastern end of Pavilion Beach where they observed the sea-serpent between the beach and Stage Point (Stage Fort Park) on the opposite side of Gloucester Harbor. Three days later, two other witnesses made observations. William Saville,

7. Sally Gibson, 'Great Slithering Sea Serpents,' *North Shore* (Essex Co. newspapers), 14 July 1979, p. 10.

8. C. L. Sargent, 'The Sea-serpent—Evidence About It,' Ms. in archives, Cape Ann Historical Association (1817-1818). Scrapbook No. 15 on the sea-serpent, archives, Cape Ann Historical Association, Gloucester, Mass.

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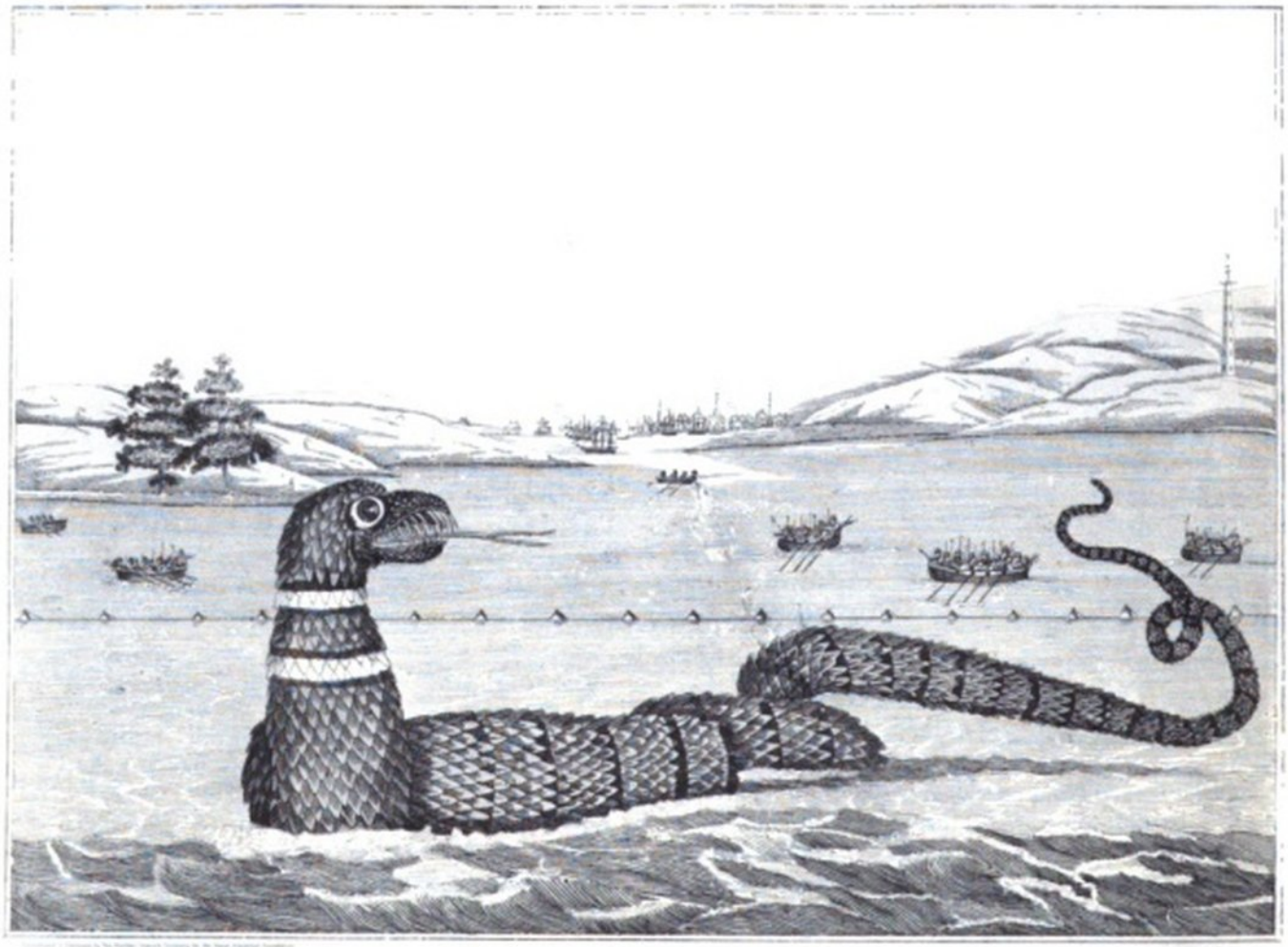

This composite portrait, made from various eye-witness accounts, provides a close-up view of the sea-serpent in Gloucester Harbor, August 1817. (Photo copy by Mark Sexton. Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Salem.)

standing near the windmill where so many people had caught sight of the sea-serpent earlier, saw 40 to 50 feet of it in distinct bunches, and Captain Corlis in a boat between the Fort and Ten Pound Island also saw some 40 feet of it from a distance of only 30 feet.

In the letter of S. G. Perkins to Edward Everett, mentioned earlier, it was further stated that the captain and crew of a vessel from Newfoundland Bank reported a sea-monster about 100 feet long off Cape Ann Harbor on 18 August. Also that day, William B. Pearson, another Gloucester merchant, while in a sailboat with James P. Collins saw the sea-serpent pass out of Webber's Cove and proceed toward Ten Pound Island. It was about 70 feet long with 10 to 12 bunches on the back, and once its head was raised slightly from the water. He agreed with other reports that it was as round as a half-barrel, dark brown in color, that it moved about a mile in three minutes with vertical motion, and that it made a sharp hair-pin turn. Perkins himself went to Cape Ann that day and observed the sea-serpent about one-eighth mile offshore.

A letter Colonel Perkins sent to John P. Cushing 13 October 1820, which was subsequently published in the *Boston Daily Advertiser* some years later (25 November 1848), described the visit of the sea-serpent to Gloucester Harbor 18 August 1817, and reported a conversa-

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tion with a Mr. Mansfield who had previously been an unbeliever in the sea-serpent, but had seen it personally stretched out over a sandy beach in some 4 to 5 feet of water on 22 August 1817. He estimated the creature to be about 100 feet long.

Judge John Davis, senior author of the Linnaean committee report, wrote to Justice Lonson Nash 2 September 1817 that the last record of the sea-serpent to his knowledge was sighted off Eastern Point 28 August 1817 by Capt. Sewell Toppan and his crew on the schooner *Laura* as they were proceeding from Newburyport to Boston. Captain Toppan was becalmed about 9:00 A.M. on 28 August some two miles east of Eastern Point (near Brace's Cove) when he saw the sea-serpent some 40 feet away not far from shore-line. It had a body the size of a half-barrel and a head the size of a ten-gallon keg held slightly above the water. The motion was vertical and produced a large wake. Two of the crew members, Robert Bragg and William Somerby, estimated the speed at 12 to 14 miles per hour and observed the tongue which was thrust out for about two feet. Judge Davis then learned that Capt. Jack Beach possessed a drawing of the sea-serpent and asked Nash if this could be published with the committee report. Nash replied that Captain Beach had been in Boston recently and that an engraving was being prepared from his drawing (copies now widely distributed). The Nash compilation of depositions was widely accepted, and Prof. W. D. Peck, a naturalist at Harvard University, stated that it was 'very free from prejudice.'[9]

In July of 1818 the sea-serpent reappeared in Gloucester Harbor. On 25 July, William Sargent counted 32 humps. Four days later some fishermen pursued it with muskets, but without success. The following day Captain Webber and several whalers got within a few yards, but their harpoon bounced off the animal. On 12 August, Timothy Hodgkins, a local sailor returning from Newburyport, observed the sea-serpent in Annisquam Harbor. He estimated the length to be 120 feet and counted 20 humps five feet apart. The body size was equal to a 70-gallon cask with a head as big as a barrel. Four days later many persons saw it near Annisquam Lighthouse where it was pursued by a fleet of whaleboats.[10]

The Boston newspapers for 21 August 1818 announced the sighting of a sea-serpent near Boston and a reward of $5,000 offered for its capture dead or alive. Also, they gave an account of the experience of Capt. Richard Rich, a whaler from Boston, who went to Cape Ann in pursuit of the sea-serpent.[11] While at the mouth of 'Squam River off Annisquam on 20 August he reported, 'After several unsuccessful attempts, we have at length fastened to this strange thing called the sea-serpent. We struck him fairly, but the harpoon soon drew out.' A few hours later a similar attempt was unsuccessful. Samuel Dexter, whose brother William (one of my forebears) commanded one of the boats under Captain Rich, related how Captain Rich, in a whaleboat and with two smaller ones, 'chased him (the sea-serpent) about seven hours when they closed with him. He passed directly under the bow of Captain Rich's boat; he immediately threw the harpoon, which pierced him about two feet; he drew the boat a considerable distance, but went with such a velocity that he broke that part of the boat through which the rope passed and drew out the harpoon.' (Oudemans later pointed out that this was the only time the creature was actually struck with a harpoon.) The pursuers observed no scales or bunches on his back which had a smooth skin and an appearance like an eel. Later on, Captain Rich did succeed in making a capture, but it turned out to be a large tunafish, or horse mackerel. Many persons were disappointed with the result, some lost faith in a belief of sea-serpents, and some refused to believe Captain Rich captured the real animal reported from these waters as a 'sea-serpent.' Dr. Jacob Bigelow, the well-known physician and botanist of Boston, wrote, 'It is hoped that the unsuccessful termination of Captain Rich's cruise will not deter others from improving any further opportunities which may occur for solving what may now perhaps be considered the most interesting problem in the science of Natural History.'[12]

Two years later Col. T. H. Perkins wrote to John P. Cushing on 13 October 1820, in reference to the catch of Captain Rich, 'Those who had declared their disbelief of the existence of the sea-serpent, amongst others, were delighted to find their opinions were confirmed.'[13]

9. W. D. Peck, 'Some Observations on the Sea-serpent,' *Mem. Amer. Acad. Arts and Sci.* 4 (no. 1, 1818), 86-91.

10. C. L. Sargent, op. cit.

11. John Gordon, *A Collection of Scientific Articles and Newspaper Reports from 1816 to 1905 Relating to that Gigantic Aquatic Monster Known as the Sea-serpent* (Gordon Press, 1926), 67 pp.; A. C. Oudemans, op. cit., pp. 16-21, 198.

12. Jacob Bigelow, 'Documents and Remarks Respecting the Sea-serpent,' *Amer. Jour. Sci. and Arts* 2 (1820), 147-49.

13. *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 25 November 1848.

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On the other hand, Prof. W. D. Peck, writing for the *American Academy of Arts and Sciences,* was among those convinced of the existence of a sea-serpent, and the *Quarterly Journal of Literature, Science, and the Arts* published in London (1818) concluded 'the existence of the animal is placed beyond doubt.' However, the famous American naturalist, Thomas Say, regretted that certain scientific journals in Europe took the story of the sea-serpent at Cape Ann seriously after Captain Rich brought in his tunafish.[14]

Andrews Norton, writing to a friend 11 September 1818, described the Cape Ann sea-serpent as 120 feet long and said the Gloucester Board of Health had sent two boats into Gloucester Harbor to intercept the sea-serpent. Prof. William D. Peck of Harvard University, a firm believer in the sea-serpent, was one of those who went in pursuit of it. However, he was among the first to declare the supposed *young* sea-serpent taken at Loblolly Point to be a diseased black snake, as did the French-American naturalist Alexander Lesueur. (In this they were correct as all zoologists have subsequently agreed.) Professor Peck was convinced that the true sea-serpent had no bunches, and the small snake collected at Loblolly Point simply had curvature of the spine, being in no way related to the sea-serpent. Another famous French-American naturalist Constantine Rafinesque rejected most claims of sea-serpents, but accepted the Cape Ann records and named the sea-serpent *Pelamis megophias,* as a real sea snake. This was typical of Rafinesque—naming animals he had never actually seen based upon reports by witnesses. He also stated that if the genus proved to be unique, the sea-serpent should be called *Megophias monsterosus.*[15]

Cheever Felch, a chaplain on the U.S. ship *Independence,* published the following account in 1820. In a small rowboat dispatched from the U.S. schooner *Science,* which was engaged in surveying Gloucester Harbor, they came abreast of Dolliver's Neck when William T. Melbourne, commander of the schooner, said, 'There is your sea-serpent!' It was some 35 yards away, immediately sank down and reappeared within some 20 yards. It then turned and headed for Ten Pound Island. It was observed for about one-half hour while passing between Ten Pound Island and Stage Point. About 100 feet of the creature were visible and it had 14 bunches about seven feet apart. It was dark brown in color, but white under the throat with a head three feet in circumference. Its swimming motion was both vertical (typical of sea-serpents) and horizontal, like a snake.[16] Many observers have reported a vertical motion (like a caterpillar), but true water snakes move only in a horizontal plane, from side to side.

Not only were American naturalists concerned over the sea-serpent, but European naturalists also became interested. Sir Joseph Banks, president of the Royal Society of London, was convinced of its reality by reports he received from American naturalists and from his countryman David Humphreys[17] who had visited Cape Ann, but he, like many other scientists, doubted the relationship of the Loblolly Cove snake with humps to the sea-serpent. Dr. J. D. Hooker, famous English explorer and naturalist, was also convinced of a real sea-serpent, largely on evidence from Cape Ann.

The day when Col. T. H. Perkins wrote to his friend John P. Cushing 13 October 1820, he again saw the sea-serpent some two miles across Gloucester Harbor off the western shore.[18] His closest view was from about a half-mile and he observed some 40 feet of the creature at a time while undergoing vertical motion. With his spyglass he detected a single horn on the head some 9-12 inches long, but Oudemans believed he saw the tongue and not a horn, since only one other observer had reported a horn, but several had observed the tongue.

According to Oudemans, the next visit of the Cape Ann sea-serpent seems to be the summer of 1824 when a Mr. Ruggles published a note in the *Newburyport Journal* of his observation of the sea-serpent off Plum Island in Ipswich Bay. He was able to observe the teeth in the creature's mouth. In a lecture given at the New York Lyceum in October of 1828 on 'The History of Sea-Serpentism' by Samuel L. Mitchill, a noted ichthyologist, it was stated that, 'This alleged monster of the deep first haunted the coast of Massachusetts, and frightened more particularly the neighborhood of Gloucester with his presence.' At first Dr. Mitchill be-

14. A. C. Oudemans, op. cit., p. 193.

15. A. C. Oudemans, op. cit., pp. 17-19.

16. Cheever Feltch, 'Extract of a Letter . . . to Editor of Boston Centinel,' *Amer. Jour. Sci. and Arts* 2 (1820), 157-59.

17. David Humphreys, *Letters to the Rt. Hon. Sir Joseph Banks Containing Some Account of the Sea-serpent Frequently Seen in Gloucester Bay* (New York: Kirk and Mercein, 1817), 86 pp.

18. *Boston Daily Advertiser,* 13 October 1820.

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lieved the accounts given by witnesses, some of which were abstracted in his lecture, but gradually he became skeptical. It was he who first identified the snake from Loblolly Cove as a deformed black snake and not the spawn of the sea-serpent. Also, he confirmed the specimen landed by Captain Rich and his crew to be nothing but a tuna. He further noted that 'after the capture of the fish [tuna], the persons who, when they saw him in the water, declared positively that he was the sea-serpent, now changed their minds and swore he was not.'[19]

At a meeting of the Essex Institute held at Kettle Cove in Manchester 12 July 1861, F. W. Putnam reported on sea-serpents.[20] He quoted his mentor Louis Agassiz, at Harvard University, saying, 'There was no reason why there should not be a sea-serpent, but as yet he knew of no sufficient proof that there was one.' Earlier, Agassiz, at a lecture delivered in Philadelphia on 20 March 1849, said, 'It would be in precise conformity with analogy that such an animal should exist in American seas. I see no chance to doubt that some huge animal with outward form much like a serpent did sometimes visit these shores.'[21] Also, Prof. Benjamin Silliman of Yale University stated, 'We are ourselves not skeptical. We do not see how such evidence as was presented by Dr. Jacob Bigelow, in our second volume (*Amer. Jour. Sci. and Arts*) can be set aside.'[22]

In a review of sea-serpents published by R. M. Devens it was pointed out that 'the vicinity of Cape Ann seems to have been a favorite resort with this monster.'[23] Evidence from Cape Ann has always remained the most detailed and convincing. However, A. S. Packard, Jr., a colleague of Putnam at the Peabody Academy of Science in Salem (now Peabody Museum of Salem), believed that the explanation offered originally by D. C. Beard that sea-serpents were actually giant squid was correct.[24] In addition to various explanations for the sea-serpent based upon misinterpretation of large marine mammals, some people believed that prehistoric monsters such as the mosasaurs, plesiosaurs, ichthyosaurs, etc. might still survive at great depths of the ocean and occasionally come to the surface. J. B. Holder wrote, 'It is tolerably well settled among zoologists that the existence of such an animal [prehistoric monster] in the present geological time is not improbable.'[25] It has also been generally understood that a 'sea-serpent' does not necessarily need to be a 'serpent' (i.e., a snake) in the literal sense. The name has been applied to a variety of large marine animals that bear no relationship to each other. The name 'sea monster' would be more appropriate. A true serpent is an air-breather and must come to the surface, but not all reported 'sea-serpents' are of that nature. Also, serpents move from side to side and not vertically as so many 'sea-serpents' were reported to do.

In 1883 Henry Lee published a book entitled *Sea Monsters Unmasked.* With reference to observations from Gloucester Harbor in the early nineteenth century he wrote, 'Of this I can offer no zoological explanation.'[26] Other reports of sea-serpents have been interpreted as a row of porpoises, sharks, giant eels, sea turtles, low-flying birds, or whales, or as mistaken observations based on floating objects or even optical illusions, but no one has given a satisfactory explanation for the observations of so many people at Cape Ann. Oudemans himself who has compiled and analyzed almost all of the known records throughout the world does not attempt to explain the Cape Ann sea-serpent.

On 24 July 1886 many people caught sight of a sea-serpent swimming off Rockport. Albert W. Tarr and his family first saw it off Gully Point as it moved across Sandy Bay, and called it to the attention of Judge Sumner D. York and his friends. On the 12th of August Calvin W. Pool and Granville B. Putnam saw it again between Andrews Point and Halibut Point as it made its way into Ipswich Bay. Testimonies for these records are deposited in the archives of the Sandy Bay Historical Society in Rockport. Putnam published an account of his observations in *History of the Town of Rockport.*[27] He estimated the length no less than 80-100 feet

19. S. L. Mitchill, 'The History of Sea-serpentism,' *Amer. Jour. Sci. and Arts* 15 (1829), 351-56.

20. F. W. Putnam, 'Notes on the Sea Serpent,' *Proceed. Essex Institute* 3 (1864), 98.

21. Alonzo Lewis and J. R. Newhall, *History of Lynn, Essex County, Mass.* (1865), 620 pp. (on sea-serpent, pp. 382-86).

22. J. W. Marshall, et al., *History of the Town of Rockport* (1888), 295 pp. (on sea-serpent, p. 255).

23. R. M. Devens, *Our First Century* (1879), 1,004 pp. (chapter on sea-serpents, p. 577).

24. A. S. Packard, Jr., 'A Note on the Sea Serpent,' *Amer. Nat.* 14 (1880), 150.

25. J. B. Holder, 'The Great Unknown,' *Century Magazine* 44 (1892), 248.

26. Henry Lee, *Sea Monsters Unmasked,* International Fisheries Exhibition (London: W. Clowes and Sons, 1883), 139 pp.

27. G. B. Putnam, 'The Sea Serpent' (pp. 251-55, in: Lemuel Gott, Ebeneezer Pool, et al., *History of the Town of Rockport,* 1888, 255 pp.).

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with a head the size of a nail cask. Its motion was vertical with a dozen humps and a speed of not more than five miles per hour. A sketch of this sea-serpent made by David Brewer as he observed it off Pigeon Cove, Rockport, is included in the Scrap Book on Sea-Serpents (No. 15) in the archives of the Cape Ann Historical Association. Also, a handwritten account of 'The Sea Serpent at Pigeon Cove' written by Virginia Henderson, sister-in-law of David Brewer, is deposited there accompanied by a brief description and a sketch of the sea-serpent showing four humps based on her observation as it rounded Andrews Point and swam toward Halibut Point in the summer of 1886. Prof. Alfred Mansfield Brooks, formerly president and curator of the association, wrote to me 29 May 1953 that Judge Sumner D. York had related to him personally a very convincing account of his observations on the sea-serpent off Rockport in 1886.

In 1955 Dr. Anton Bruun, a noted Danish oceanographer, announced at the International Congress of Zoology held at Copenhagen that he believed sea-serpents really existed, and was planning to organize an expedition into southern waters, but this he did not live to do. He narrowed down all of the records which came to his attention to what he believed were six 'indisputably authentic' cases, including the ones which visited Cape Ann in 1817-1819.[28]

All told, many supposedly valid visits were made to Cape Ann by the Great Sea-Serpent between 1639 and 1886. The explanation still remains a mystery.

28. A. E. Hotchner, 'Are There Sea Serpents, Really?' *This Week* (magazine supplement to N.Y. *Herald Tribune*), 14 Aug. 1955, pp. 17, 19.

Dr. Ralph W. Dexter published his first paper for the American Neptune *in the spring issue of 1985 which was devoted to 'A Century of Fishery Biology at Cape Ann, Massachusetts.' He was born and raised in Gloucester, and studied the marine life of Cape Ann for his doctoral dissertation (1933-1937), and has continued research on Cape Ann marine ecology to the present time. He is now Professor Emeritus of Biological Sciences at Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.*

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